



Montana
Office of Public Instruction
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DATE: August 3, 2012

TO: School Administrators

FROM: Christine Emerson, Director
School Nutrition Programs

RE: New School Meal Pattern Requirements

On January 25, 2012, the USDA published its revisions to meal pattern and nutrition requirements for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. The changes to the National School Lunch Program go into effect during SY 2012-13.

The new meal pattern ensures that all students receive a healthy meal that is nutritionally balanced for their age and in line with the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. School meals help students form life-long eating habits. Help get them off on the right foot by encouraging them to make healthy choices in the lunch line. Following the meal pattern is essential to ensuring that kids receive the nutrition they need to learn, grow, and succeed.

The new meal pattern for lunch includes:

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| ✓ More whole grains | ✓ Age-appropriate portion sizes and calorie limits |
| ✓ Larger servings of fruits and vegetables | ✓ Less sodium |
| ✓ A wider variety of vegetables | ✓ Less added sugar |
| ✓ Fat-free and 1% milk only | ✓ Less saturated fat |

Kids need adequate access to good nutritious meals throughout the day. It is impossible to make up for a lost meal or nutrients in one meal alone. If you are worried about your students' getting enough nutrition throughout the school day and beyond, check out these other nutrition programs and meal service options;

Other OPI School Nutrition Programs and service options:

- ✓ The School Breakfast Program
- ✓ The Afterschool Snack Program at your school
- ✓ The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
- ✓ The Summer Food Service Program
- ✓ Some schools allow extra servings of fruits and vegetables during lunch time to fill students' appetites with nutrient dense, low calorie foods.

The Montana Food Bank Network:

- ✓ Backpack Program (provides a backpack of food for chronically hungry kids over the weekend)
<http://mfbn.org/food/backpackprogram>

Other nutrition programs for the whole family:

- ✓ SNAP (formerly known as the Food Stamp Program) <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/snap/index.shtml>
- ✓ WIC Program (for families with children age 5 and under) <http://wic.mt.gov/>

There are plenty of ways to help kids get the nutrition they need. Schools are often the heart of a community. By helping your students access healthy nutritious meals in and out of the lunch line, you are helping strengthen your community.

Thank you for all of your hard work and support.

The Montana Office of Public Instruction provides vision, advocacy, support, and leadership for schools and communities to ensure that all students meet today's challenges and tomorrow's opportunities.